(a) whether private entrepreneurs deterred by uncertainty of cash flows and returns feel shy to enter into the power sector;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether unless Government improve the power sector, it is difficult to attract both public and private investments in power sector?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI): (a) to (c) The response of the private sector to the private power programme has been encouraging with 128 expressions of interest for setting up generation capacity of 70,549 MW and involving a projected investment of Rs. 2,53,405.29 crores. However, in order to improve the viability of these projects, Government have been taking steps from time to time. These include offering alternative comfort packages in the short term and sector reforms and restructuring in the long run.

Assistance for Civic Amenities

647. SHRI V.M. SUDHEERAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any proposal from Government of Kerala regarding financial assistance to certain municipalties for providing civiç amenities; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF URBAN AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (DR. U. VENKATESWARLU): (a) and (b) Provision of civic amenities is the responsibility of the local bodies concerned. These local bodies formulate their schemes in consultation with the State Governments cpncerned. State Governments on their part render assistance to the local bodies under various schemes and also through borrowing from financial institutions like HUDCO, LIC etc. Government of India plays only a nodal and catalytic role.

However, under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of the Integrated Development of Small and Medium Towns (IDSMT), against the allocated number of 1 town for coverage during the period 1996-98, the Government of Kerala have submitted the project reports for 4 towns, namely, Pathanamthitta, Muvattupyzha. Ottapalam and Kothamangalam. Town and Country Plannings. Organisation (TCPO) has already prepared the Appraisal Report which requires to be considered by the State Level Sanctioning Committee. IDSMT Scheme aims at the improvement of township infrastructure.

Under the Centrally Sponsored Accelerated Urban Water Supply Programme (AUWSP), during 1996-97, detailed project reports of Pudukkad, Peralesserry and Koraty towns have been forwarded by the Kerala Water Authority (KWA). The proposal in respect of Pudukkad had been approved at an estimated project cost of Rs. 137.10 lakhs in August, 1996. During 1996-97, Central Share of Rs. 34 lakhs has so far been released to Government of Kerala under AUWSP. The proposals in respect of the other two towns have been scrutinised and comments forwarded to K.W.A. Further action in this regard will be taken after receipt of reply from K.W.A.

Urban Employment Scheme

648. SHRI T. GOVINDAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government introduced any new scheme for employment of the urban people during the last financial year and the amount spent so far in this direction. State-wise; and

(b) the amount which remained unutilised and the number of people benefitted during 1996?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF URBAN AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (DR. U. VENKATESWARLU): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Prime Minister's Integrated Urban Poverty Eradication Programme (PMIUPEP) was launched in November, 1995 to reddress the problems of urban poverty in small towns. Under the self employment component (one of the several components of PMIUPEP) the unemployed and under-employed urban poor are encouraged to set up small enterprises/ventures relating to servicing petty business and manufacturing, to enhance their economic position.

The PMI UPEP is applicable to all urban agglomerations with a population between 50,000 to 1,00,000 in the country plus 72 Hill District towns. The implementation of the programme is done by the States/UTs through the Urban Local Bodies and the community (through community based organisations). An amount of Rs. 105.80 Crores has been released to States/UTs for the year 1995-96. Rs. 21.2228 Crores has been released to six States uptil now for 1996-97. According to available reports, out of the total funds. (Central + State share) provided, an amount of Rs. 2622.7057 lakhs for 1995-96 has been utilised and Rs. 17,832.385 lakhs remains to be spent by the State/UT Governments. A statement showing State-wise Expenditure incurred and unspent amount is enclosed. The Programme was launched in November , 1995. It is still largely in a preliminery stage involving conduct of surveys. Preparation of town-wise project reports, etc. In all, five million urban poor are targetted to benefit during the five year period ending 1999-2000.